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A

R E P L Y

To the Gentleman who has published
a Pamphlet, entitled “ Arguments
for and against an Union.”

IN WHICH

Mr. M’Kenna’s Memoire is taken into
Consideration.

By *ISAAC BURKE BETHEL, Esq.*

BARRISTER AT LAW.

*Nos patriâ amisâ dominis parere superbis
Cogemur.*

VIRG.

D U B L I N:

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A R E P L Y

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brought to an argumentative conclusion.

In giving my thoughts on a subject, and
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A R E P L Y, &c.

IN all subjects that are to be spoken to, or written upon, the difficulty lies in the manner that subject is to be entered upon, how the merits of it are to be discussed and brought to an argumentative conclusion.

In giving my thoughts on a subject that is of such magnitudinal import to the honor and interests of my native land, I shall most cautiously avoid coming into personal contact with any of those Gentlemen who have gone before me, lest in the notice that I should bestow on the writer, I should be betrayed into an observance of the individual.

Having read with profound attention a Pamphlet, intitled "Arguments for and against an Union," I own that the impression made on my mind by those argu-

ments has not been of that weight, as to disable me from shewing myself superior to that weakness which momentarily suffered it.—“ If,” says the Pamphleteer, “ this question is to be decided by passion, or by force, there is no mischief which the agitation of the question may not produce ; if it is to be determined on its merits, it cannot fail to be useful. In one case the rejection or adoption of it would terminate in discontent or convulsion ; in the other, the result of conviction would produce satisfaction.”—I most implicitly agree with the learned Politician, that if there is any thing like passion or force used or attempted to be used, either in the proposal or the accomplishment of such a measure, as that of an Union between this Country and Great Britain, that it will terminate in discontent or convulsion.

Now for the merits, which, he says, must be examined with philosophic temper, he proposes, as a means to make us happy as a people, (presupposing us very unhappy) living as we do, singly and independent,

dependent, that we should unite ourselves with a happy and prosperous Nation, and thereby participate in its happiness and prosperity—most certainly, if this were an Island filled with Savages and Barbarians, having no idea of Agriculture, of Commerce, of Law, Physic or Divinity, it would be condescending and humane in the proud and the polished Briton to wish us to *unite* with him, in order that our morals and manners might be fashioned to his own, in order that we might be taught that obedience to the law, that honesty in dealing, that decency, and that observance of the Christian religion, which make England at once the envy and admiration of the world. But until I can be brought to think that my Countrymen are in such a want of cultivation, I must resist with indignation, I will not say *force*, the kind condescension of the accomplished Englishman.

Whatever condition this kingdom, (standing as she is, naturally independent of any other) was in, previous to the year

1782,

1782, however she might have been dictated to by British emissaries, whose political friendship for this Country made it always subservient to their own, however the commerce of this Country was restricted, and her constitution unacknowledged and kept down; yet the idea of putting poor Ireland on a footing with England, by bringing her Parliament and its Members across the channel, never entered the brain of any of those emissaries.

It is strange, that notwithstanding the high commercial advantages we obtained in that ever memorable year, and which have continued to us—notwithstanding we have shewed ourselves competent to decide for ourselves, in every thing that has relation with Church and State,—it is strange indeed, that after a period of sixteen years universally progressive improvement, a measure should now be attempted so subversive of common order, common sense, and common compact.

The author in support of his reasons in favor of his proposed measure has in my
mind

mind most unhappily mentioned two or three cases which he presumes to be in point, but which I most humbly presume to be the contrary; when the Seven United Provinces, being *cruelly* oppressed by the Spanish government, separated from that government, in order to escape from tyranny, &c. and when the Sabines found they could not maintain themselves any longer against the Romans, they then united themselves, after they could not maintain themselves, and you say they acted according to the principles of reason and good sense in submitting to the Roman yoke, *i. e.* because they could not maintain themselves! so that because they could not maintain themselves against Rome, Rome maintained herself against them in the plunder of her liberties and in the ravishment of their wives and daughters; ergo, if we cannot maintain ourselves against the monster that is now in embryo, he will rise up and crush us to the earth.

I most sincerely thank you, Sir, for what you call this reasoning against all declamation

mation upon the common topics of “*national dignity and national pride.*” I do not know a more effectual way of silencing declamation than the hint you so good naturedly throw out—let a man if a measure is proposed to him that degrade him, his family and his country, let him cry out against that measure in the voice of thunder—strangle him and you will soon put an end to his declamation.

If any person should ask you why you done so? say that your ear was not fitted to hear Irish music, and that you acted upon the authority of ROMAN EXAMPLE and ROMAN GREATNESS.

If any one should ask you if you were aware of the murder that you had committed, and the events which followed it, in order to complete the deed, namely, the rapine, the massacre, the *carnage in every sense of the word* by the “*brave and orderly soldiery,*”—tell them that the Sabines met with the same fate for their impudence and obstinacy.

England, say you, was formerly divided
into

into seven kingdoms, and by that division the island was a general scene of confusion; but a sagacious Prince brought them together and they then eat of the same regimen, they associated under one code of government and one sovereignty, and became happy—In the name of common sense how does this apply to the question that you said should be debated with philosophy—a few petty provinces within the realm, and bounded by the same sea, hold out in a kind of petty rebellion, distinct in their laws and manners, against the King of England, and were deservedly punished for their treason.

I suspect, Sir, that you were driven to those cases, in order to cover the dark and ambiguous expression you make use of in your first page, namely, that of bringing about your favorite measure *by force*; what a fatal day for Ireland and also for England! —“ How is a Welshman, say you, degraded by being represented in the British Parliament. How ridiculous! a Welchman who can on foot walk and instruct his re-

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presentative. How can a Scot be enslaved by becoming a Briton—I answer, he is in the same kingdom with a Briton. It is the surveyor of the land who divides him by construction and by rule; the Scot also can on foot put his wooden pipe and tobacco in his pocket, and see his representative in a couple of days.—The case is not so with an Irishman; he seldom travels from his country but to serve his King, and when he does, that it is from *voluntary impulse*, and not *mean submission*.

That “Naval greatness,” which my political adversary says is “unrivalled,” owes much of that greatness to the unpurchased valour of Irishmen.—But that moment that an Irishman is told that his Parliament is gone, that his landlord resides in another kingdom, for the purpose of representing him, that he must, in order to instruct him in any measure which would be beneficial to his country, endure the expence and the danger of a sea voyage, that moment he withdraws himself from so extravagant an idea, he withdraws himself

self

self from that confidence which he reposes in his representative, and would conceive that he was bound to alienate himself from his allegiance.—“ Ireland will be gradually rising to the level of England;” that is, if there is an Union. As well might the learned gentleman tell me that a servant is on a level with his master, if he is on the same floor with him.

As to the paragraph where he says, that a man by being introduced to good company will hob nob with more elegance, this is so puerile, so nonsensical, and so dancing-master like, that as an Irishman I cannot stoop to notice it.—“ Supposing there were no other reasons which rendered the Union of the sister kingdom desirable, the state of Europe, and especially of France, seem to dictate its peculiar policy at the present day.” Here again the author supposes we are made to be dupes to English artifice, and to English policy; for he says, that France has incorporated a great addition of territory, but has rendered absolutely dependent on her will
almost

almost all the smaller states that surround her—and by what means has she done that, indeed she did not write a Pamphlet on the subject, so far she acted up to the treachery of her character, but there is still an inapplication—those smaller states that she had subdued and plundered were in hostility to her;—are we in hostility with England? Good God is it because that a few ambitious young men, placed themselves at the head of a ridiculous mob in the interior parts of Ireland, that the genius, the spirit, and the loyalty of Dublin are to be sacrificed;—that genius, and that spirit, and that loyalty which put down rebellion, and resisted the contagious enemy, and beat him from our shore, are they to be addressed thus by Britons.—

“ Irishmen, for the last 12 months we have been much troubled with your internal divisions, you have corresponded with our powerful enemy France, you have shewed her how she might invade you and detach you from us, and you have done every thing that threatens the overthrow

of

of our Monarchy, we therefore think proper to curb your licentiousness, we will take your Parliament, which was the hot-bed of treason against our mild and merciful King, from you; whatever there was virtuous among you we will take from you, and you shall become a country of labourers and manufacturers; you shall give corn to our cattle, and cattle to our navy." If this be the language you hold out to us, I do not know in what tongue to reply to it, but I would say, that the spirited Parliament, which was, during the little scene of confusion, protected by a Spirited Yeomanry, deserved a better treatment; I would say that the Gentlemen of the Irish Bar, who embodied themselves in arms by permission of Lord Camden, and the government of this country, to protect Lord Camden and his government from foreign and domestic enemies, to protect his castle and his person from being seized upon, have now received a miserable boon for their services.

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In no instance was the maxim of “ example is more forcible than precept ” exemplified than in the numerous bodies of men who followed the Lawyers corps in their spirited endeavours to crush rebellion and treason in whatsoever shape they might make their appearance ; and after this rebellion is put down, after the enemy is led captive to his prison, or to the place of execution, after we have gained a complete victory both by land and by sea, after we have sheathed our sword and unfixed our bayonet, is that the period for an English gentleman to draw his pen across the independence of Ireland, and make her a blank in the map of Europe.

I will pass over all the other passages in his Pamphlet, they have been ably answered by some of my brethren in the profession, particularly Messrs. Ball and Jebb ; the one has shewed him the high honor and spirit of an Irishman ; the other the cool and discriminating discernment of commercial inquiry. The one has taken him to pieces ; the other lifts him up to
public

public view, and exposes all his broken parts. And here I most candidly assure my Countrymen, that were it not a regard I had to my own promise, which I am now sorry for, and which I am willing to admit was made at a time to put a stop to good-natured solicitation, I should not have felt it necessary to trouble them or myself upon a subject that I fear they have read too much of.

I cannot dismiss these few lines without bestowing some observations on another Gentleman, who appears an advocate for the unhappy measure, and who tells you that it would be highly pleasing to many; to erect an independent government on every ten square miles of Europe; and this he says as seriously as if he believed one word of the matter.—“We might rehearse,” says he, “the advantages which the Inhabitants were to derive from such *organization*.” I am concerned that such an expression escaped him—it has a republican sound; but I do most confidently deny that any body of men in this country,

try, that had respectability attached to them, ever entertained a wish to have an independent government every ten miles near them, or in their vicinage, as long as they conceived they were inhabitants of an independent Island, possessing a FREE CONSTITUTION, and an UNSHACKLED COMMERCE.—I am free to acknowledge that if it were the case, we would be incapable of *vigorous enterprize*, or *effectual combination for resistance*; we would then fall beneath the sword of a powerful adversary.—If the inhabitants of Killala, Castlebar, &c. were little independent States, they would have fallen beneath General Humbert and his followers; but being connected with us, we gave them our aid, and made prisoners of the invaders.

“ Ireland will derive importance, when by the share in the general representation which she is intitled to obtain, she will be enabled to influence, *in some respect*, the Councils of the Empire.”—I do believe that her influence would be but in *some respect*; but with great respect to Mr. McKenna, (for he is an avowed author) I totally

tally differ from him in *every respect*.—At present we have an House of Lords and an House of Commons, the members of both amount in number to about five hundred. The Gentleman who is prolocutor of the Lords is an Irishman. The speaker of the Commons is also an Irishman. If a member of either House is affected by a particular or a general grievance, he submits his ideas and the whole subject undergoes discussion, which terminates in his redress, either for himself or his constituent. If the constituent is affected by a particular law, he can immediately wait on his representative, who will be bound by his duty to have that law repealed. If the representative sees any mode by which liberty and property can be better secured to the Irish nation, he is bound to propose it, and that in a place where he can be heard by the president or speaker, with attention and respect; but for my part I cannot foresee what attention my lord Loughborough* or Mr. Addington† will pay to Irish oratory

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* Lord Chancellor. † Speaker.

tory, or what influence an Irish member would have in the councils of the empire upon any topic that interfered with the dignity and the aggrandizement of a British Parliament. An Irish gentleman, who was the honor and the idol of the Irish Parliament, I mean Mr. Henry Flood, concluded a very able and eloquent speech, amidst the yawns and coughs of an English senate.

I am well aware of the rooted prejudices, I had almost said hatred, that lodges in the breast of some Englishmen towards Irishmen; of the insolent and the impudent authority they assume, in all matters that relate to state policy, and to court intrigue. Doctor Swift might well observe, that the man who was of figure and consequence in this country, a voyage to the HEAD and a *journey to St. James!* soon reduced him to absolute insignificance.—The mention of such a man as Swift, starts a train of melancholy ideas in my mind, as are not easily to be repressed; would to
God

God we had such a man to write upon such a subject!

But to return, I know of no power or influence that we can have over the councils of the Empire, superior to that which we have through the medium of our own Parliament, until Mr. Mc. K. shews me, by mathematical calculation, that one is more than five—he never can persuade me that a few delegated Peers, from the lords of Ireland, and a few returned Commoners to the Parliament of Great Britain, can ever have, in *some respect*, or any respect, influence on the councils of the Empire. “But people,” says Mr. Mc. K. “talks of the national debt of Britain,” and then he like a *lawyer* contends “that though we are not legally, we are at this hour effectively pledged to support with our resources the credit of Great Britain.” And pray Mr. Mc. K. who has denied but that we should support Great Britain in her credit; who will deny but we have proportioned to our means, supported her in all emergencies: But give me leave to

ask Mr. Mc. K. if the measure is to be carried which he so *cheerfully embraces*, namely that of *Legislative Union*, how will Ireland then be able to contribute to the payment of the national debt. SADDLED as *she will be with that debt, and stript at the same time of her PROPERTY!*

It has been mentioned by some of my coadjutors, that the Delegates, Peers and Commons, will reside near the minister; that they will receive from this country 500,000*l.* per Annum. that they will seldom visit their demesnes and their mansions; that their agents here will, in the absence of their master, domineer over the unfortunate tenant, and drive him to distress, to misfortune, to despair and to madness; all this I believe will happen. But I will go further and assert, that there is not a gentleman of 500*l.* per ann. will live in this country; there is not a gentleman who has 500*l.* per ann. who is not intimately connected with the leading men of this country, and consequent-

ly would feel it his interest and advantage to follow the fortunes of those men whenever it was their will and pleasure to abandon us. “ Perhaps,” says Mr. Mc. K. “ inquisitive research is at this very moment employed in exploring, or in opening the markets, by the supply of which this momentous operation is to be effected.” I cannot suppose it possible that any mercantile speculator would be so lost to his own interest as to produce any article of manufacture for sale at a market, unless that he was sure of a bidder; much less can I be brought to suppose, that any man is employed in opening a market, on the presumed ruin of his country. I have not a doubt but if Mr. Mc. K’s. measure is accomplished, without a struggle made by the pen of Irish genius, to shew its injustice and its impolicy to those who would propose it, that Waterford and a few other towns in Ireland might receive some commercial advantage. Whilst I am candid in thus treating the subject, I should have been glad Mr. Mc. K. had pointed

pointed out what disadvantages those towns have laboured under, where they were inferior to Dublin in point of credit or in respect to manufactures, here with all his classical ingenuity, I do believe he would have failed.—There is one short question I would ask Mr. M'K. are we not in possession of all the commercial advantages that England could grant us by an Union? If I am answered in the affirmative, why should we send 500,000l. per ann. to England? why should we send the wealth and the consequence out of this country? why should that noble building in College-green be turned into a coach-house and stable for some military general and his officers? why should the proprietors of the respectable squares in the city of Dublin be literally robbed of the industry of themselves, of their families, and their ancestry? until those questions are answered to my entire satisfaction, I must pronounce that man an idiot who thinks he can propose such a measure with safety.

Mr.

Mr. M·K. has in the remaining part of his pamphlet introduced himself so strongly to a seat in the British legislature, that I do not feel it necessary to speak for a reply to all that he has advanced upon the side of catholic claims; for it cannot be supposed possible that he would talk of catholic emancipation, and in the same breath the extinction of Parliament in this country.— The Irish catholic cannot suffer himself to be duped by such pretended advocacy.

A party in this country calling themselves Orangemen have been dealt with severely by M. M·K. I am not of that party, but whatever I have learned of their principles I am led to think that they are a spirited and well-disposed set of men, who associated for the purpose of counteracting the designs of a *party* who intended the overthrow of our “*King, Lords and Commons.*” I care not whether the party who protects my castle from attack, and my property from plunder, get drunk with power or with wine: I care not whether they drink the health of KING WILLIAM
or

or my UNCLE TOBY ; they have answered a wise and beneficial purpose, and for that reason they deserve my gratitude and my thanks. Mr. M'K. should be delicate or silent when he speaks of a party ; he should recollect the Pamphlet he wrote some few years back, where he says he is not so squeamish or so fastidious as not to own himself of a party, he avows himself the literary champion of the Whig Club and the panegyrist of their leaders, and their widely extended principles ; this is the party that Mr. M'K. should have employed his pen to expose their wickedness and their folly, as he was best acquainted with both. I am not insinuating any thing like blame to Mr. M'K. for *deserting* that party, he might have entered into it with the best views, that of giving a political opposition to an able, or as he was pleased to say, *at that time*, a profligate minister ; but I blame him for throwing any thing like censure upon a loyal body of men, who united themselves for the purpose of crushing treason and rebellion.

On this very question of an Union, says Mr. M^cK. there must be ten thousand different opinions; and then he says, it would be unwise to reconcile them.—I am sorry he thinks so; if I am sure he thought it wise or prudent to make converts of them, he would have attempted it. But I strongly suspect that upon the subject of an Union in this country there are but two opinions.—It is Waterford versus Dublin, Cork against same, Belfast against same. It is the *Builder* and the *Dairyman* that are at issue. It is Merrion-square and the Bog of Allen that are in controversy. It is the pensioned slave and the proud freeman that are in combat. And is Mr. M^cK. to pay no attention to the opinion formed and the resolutions entered into by that high and respectable body of men the Irish bar; is he to pay no attention to the names of a Saurin, a Spencer, a Barrington, a Duquerry, a Bushe, a Powel, and a Plunket; men who spurned the paltry honors that were offered to them, when they were told that they were the purchase

of the rights and the liberties of their country ; men who feel that they have but a life estate in those immunities, which were left them by their fathers, and which in honor and in conscience they are bound piously to transmit unimpaired to their children.

With Mr. M'K. I have done, he is a gentleman whom I knew early in private life, and for whom I entertained sentiments of regard and respect. It is his political creed that I disapprove of, and condemn. It is his forgetfulness of the benefits he received from an Irish Parliament, who removed the disability he labored under in his civil and political capacity. It is of that kind of forgetfulness I would complain. It is the obliviscence of his country, of her rights, of her liberties, of her independence, of *himself*; it is that want of memory that makes a man appear at once odious and ungrateful. To his reflections I commit him.

I fear that I have not kept up to my promise as I have gone on. I felt it was impossible.

possible. God help us, we promise more, much more than we are able to perform; to be cool on such a subject I believe will be the lot only of those men who wish plausibly to dispose of my country, those who write for that country and wish to preserve her name among the nations of the earth, write from their feelings, and from their hearts.

I find my countrymen that I have been anticipated in many of the observations that it was originally my intention to have made on this great question of an Union, twenty gentlemen have entered the lists, they have from facts stubborn, and arguments invincible, demonstrated the cruelty, the impolicy, and the danger of agitating this question in the ensuing Parliament; they have demonstrated the folly and absurdity in the court champions supposing for a moment they could cajole Irishmen into a comparison with the Scotch nation, who after it had pusilanimously consented to the surrender and to the sale of their Parliament upon treaty, that treaty scandalously and shamefully

shamefully violated in the IMPOSITION OF A TAX which *their Peerage and their Commons unanimously resisted*, but resisted in vain!!! and therefore as I have been saved much trouble you are relieved.

I shall conclude with adjuring the British minister to pause before he will entirely consent to or rather dictate a measure fraught with such destruction to a country that has so uniformly supported him in all his financiering adjustments. I do adjure and beseech the great men who have been and are now in England receiving instructions, how they are to act upon this great, this perilous occasion, to ponder with a caution becoming the importance and the sagacity of their characters, and proportioned to the magnitude of the work before them, how they will pledge themselves to the support of a system that must degrade them and their posterity for ever, that they will see the satisfying of a few individuals in the paltry gratification of title is no compensation to the unborn sons of those
 individuals

individuals who if the title will descend (which, considering the manner it is conferred, and the tenure by which it will be held, I have my doubts) IT WILL BE WORN NOT AS THE INSIGNIA OF HEREDITARY HONOR, BUT THE BADGE OF INTAILED SLAVERY.

In this appeal to their better and their nobler feelings, I am not actuated by any selfish motives. For my King and my Country, my pen, like my sword, has been solicitous and ready in defence of both. MY REWARD HAS BEEN MY OWN. My labours for the last four years in the way of my profession, have been directed for the public good. Sometimes, and too often, have I ventured myself for an unhappy fellow creature, who was teased and oppressed by a cruel and rapacious creditor; sometimes with success, but oftener succeeded in making myself a number of enemies, and enemies of those who were formerly my friends:—However, upon a subject like the present, I trust that they will forget, or rather permit their animosities

animosities to give way to more generous considerations, and that they will unite with me and their able brethren in the profession, to advise the leading members of both countries not to attempt a measure, the accomplishing of which must fix an indelible stain on the liberties, the laws and the constitution of this realm.

I shall take my leave, nearly in the words of Sir Wm. Blackstone. ‘THE PROTECTION OF THE LIBERTY OF IRELAND IS A DUTY WHICH WE OWE TO OURSELVES WHO ENJOY IT, TO OUR ANCESTORS WHO TRANSMITTED IT DOWN, AND TO OUR POSTERITY WHO WILL CLAIM IT AT OUR HANDS; THIS, THE BEST BIRTHRIGHT AND NOBLEST INHERITANCE OF MANKIND !

ISAAC BURKE BETHEL,

ARRAN QUAY.

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